

# Special issue—socioeconomic perspective on physical activity and aging

Heinz Mechling

Published online: 14 October 2011

© European Group for Research into Elderly and Physical Activity (EGREPA) 2011

Browsing the different areas listed in the EURAPA homepage, you will find a broad scope of topics related to physical activity and aging (PAA). They encompass the narrow sense of PAA covering only protective and therapeutical factors or exercise programs. New scientific and sociopolitical developments demonstrate that PAA has become more and more related to questions of society and economy. This broader perspective includes health- and safety-enhancing effects and age-related diseases such as osteoporosis, dementia, depression, and falls (their prevention, consequences, and costs). Beyond these topics, home and residential situation are regarded. This society-oriented focus of PAA leads to research differentiations, as represented in the papers of this issue, but also to the individual perspective considering the social-individual, psychological situation, and the psychosocial background of personal well-being.

Considering topical and future research and looking beyond our own borders, these perspectives could be integrated in the emerging and undoubtedly highly relevant field of epigenetics. Changes in gene expression as responses to behavioral and environmental exposures are researched in epigenetics. Epigenetic mechanisms are active in the brain throughout lifetime. This perspective could contribute to explaining mechanisms of disease and aging. Interdisciplinary research between epigenetics and the socioeconomic perspectives on PAA will become more significant in the future in order to find significant factors and mechanisms with which to stimulate, influence, and regulate the quantity and quality of physical activity in our aging societies. We would like to invite our readership to submit articles on the highly topical

subject of epigenetics in combination with biomedical, behavioral, and socioeconomic perspectives of PAA.

We are delighted, and indeed very grateful, that Dr. Breuer and his contributing colleagues—with their different orientations—accepted the challenge for this special issue and introduced this important background of the socioeconomic perspective to EURAPA. The reader will find some more papers in this issue which are not directly related to the topic of the special issue.

## Development of EURAPA and important information

Some information on the development of EURAPA is of importance for our EGREPA members, our readers, and submitters. Firstly, the newly released impact factor by Thomson Reuters in June 2011 shows an improvement for EURAPA to 0.947. EURAPA now ranks 36 of 44 titles in the category “geriatrics and gerontology.”

Going forward, when submitting a paper, it will now be mandatory to fill in a form with a conflict of interest statement which is integrated into the Editorial Manager™ system (please see the instructions for authors for further information). Furthermore, authors will now be able to propose possible reviewers for their paper on submission.

And finally, as one of the founding and acting editors, Prof. Sagiv departed from his position as editor in chief (biomedical sciences) at the end of 2010. We would like to thank him, as one of the forerunners, for making every effort to get this journal on a successful way and for accompanying it tirelessly for 7 years. His advice will still be welcome in the future.

We hope to be able to present and introduce a new editor in this position in our next issue of EURAPA. We look forward to the future development of EURAPA and hope for your increasing support as EGREPA members, authors, and readers.

---

H. Mechling (✉)  
German Sport University Cologne,  
Cologne, Germany  
e-mail: [mechling@dshs-koeln.de](mailto:mechling@dshs-koeln.de)